



4. Next Steps

- a. Implementation Strategy
- b. Development Program
- c. Project Phasing

Downtown Entertainment

The universal response to an inquiry for directions to a restaurant or a place to “hang out” in Columbus should be; “Go to Fourth and Washington for Food and Fun!”

Implementation Strategy

Overview

Already recognized as a workplace and center for entertainment and recreation, Downtown Columbus has the opportunity to leverage its reputation in the region and establish itself as a unique regional hub of diverse urban lifestyle options. To achieve this position in the market, emphasis should be placed on the following core strategies and actions:

Strategy A: Grow Downtown's hospitality and amateur sports activities and venues

- Action A1. Capture more of the increasing number of Columbus-area room nights in the downtown; target business travelers; amateur sports participants, and tourists by building a hotel.
- Action A2. While not all amateur sports facilities should or could be located near downtown, a significant venue should be developed on real estate near downtown.
- Action A3. Serve the surplus demand for downtown business meeting space and address the need for indoor support functions for festivals, amateur sports tournaments and Mill Race Park events with new meeting facilities.

Strategy B: Attract discretionary spending, both visitor and resident, by introducing new and unique food, retail, and entertainment offerings

- Action B1. Build off of the current entertainment and dining base in Downtown by attracting both new and existing diverse and unique venues to key locations in Downtown.
- Action B2. Promote Downtown as a destination for Columbus residents and visitors looking for “third place” hangouts, entertainment, and fine foods.

Strategy C: Expand Downtown housing to include quality market-rate housing in and near Downtown

- Action C1. Identify land ready for redefinition and appropriate for new mixed-use housing development to serve as a catalyst for “downtown” housing as an option in Columbus.
- Action C2. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing, underutilized upper floors of commercial buildings along Washington Street.

Strategy D: Continue diversification of Downtown users to include expanded adult education offerings

- Action D1. Implement “incubator” facility for one of the adult education institutions in Columbus.
- Action D2. Begin a study and evaluation process to determine the scope of a potential adult education “branch” campus in Downtown.

Strategy E: Address barriers to downtown development including parking convenience and affordability, recurring odor problems, and the need for overall development management

- Action E1. Build one or more parking garages to increase the number of spaces available within and close to the commercial core.
- Action E2. Define and implement a parking program for the downtown that “sorts” users (workers, overnight guests, short-term visitors, etc.) and identifies appropriate public parking with clearly visible signage.
- Action E2. Fund and empower a Downtown advocate, empowered to facilitate development and programs supporting economic vitality.

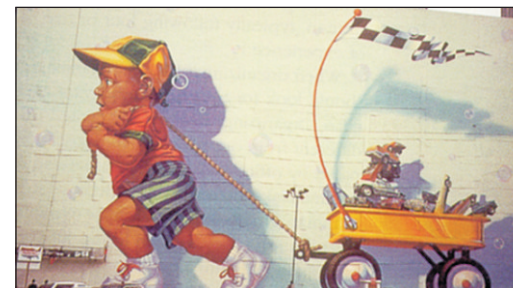
Strategy F: Retain and grow the current business base through ongoing support and reinforcement initiatives

- Action F1. Organize and facilitate an incubator and support program for independent retailers, with special emphasis on sustaining current enterprises.
- Action F2. Develop and fund a capital improvements revolving loan fund that targets key facility infrastructure needs (e.g. ADA and other code requirements) that currently limit the reuse of existing buildings, especially upper floors.

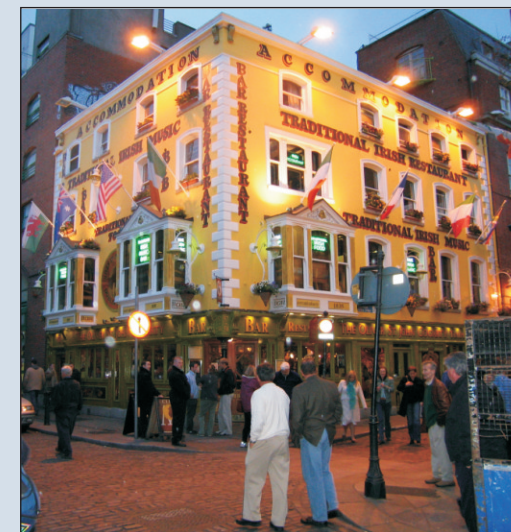
The Columbus Entertainment District (CED)

Within Downtown, the Fourth and Washington Streets intersection (as a sub-district of the Civic & Entertainment District) has the greatest opportunity to achieve short-term change while building momentum for future development investments. Findings identified during this study that support a focused investment in an entertainment district centered on the Fourth and Washington Streets intersection include:

- A cluster of existing food and drink establishments
- Land that is available for development
- Multiple blocks ready for redefinition
- Potential for connecting with proposed Riverfront Development and Mill Race Park
- Extensive calendar of annual events on key sites around Fourth Street
- History of many cultural events at several locations including the Commons, kidscommons, and Crump Theater and presented by multiple groups including the Columbus Area Arts Council, downtown retailers, and civic organizations
- Several of the strongest retail blocks in Downtown nearby
- Opportunity to address commonly recognized parking issues for a wide variety of users



The Columbus Entertainment District should include imaginative and creative features that encourage people to tell others about their exciting and interesting experience in Downtown Columbus.



The proposed Civic & Entertainment District will offer residents and visitors an engaging “24-hour” destination in Downtown Columbus. As shown in the images above and below, the district should be the showpiece of Columbus with an aesthetic and energizing quality unlike anything currently offered in the region.



Columbus Entertainment District (CED) at Fourth and Washington Streets



Legend

Existing Entertainment Venues

1. Yes Cinema
2. Bistro 310
3. Food Court
4. Commons
5. Zaharakos Confectionary
6. kidscommons (2005)
7. Art Columbus Gallery
8. Crump Theater
9. 4th Street Bar
10. Smith's Row
11. Divino
12. Papa's Downtown Deli
13. The Columbus Bar
14. Columbus Inn
15. Commons Cinema
16. Columbus Visitors Center
17. Bartholomew County Public Library
18. Columbus Museum of Art & Design

Development Tiers

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3
- Tier 4

Downtown Districts

- New Urban Residential District
- Uptown Urban District
- Civic and Entertainment District
- Support and Expansion District
- Downtown Residential District
- Greenbelt
- Undeveloped Land
- Columbus Entertainment District
- People Trail
- Key CED Streets

Next Steps

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The Streets

Development initiatives should work towards enriching “street life” along the Fourth and Washington Street corridors within the CED. Developments should be encouraged to keep the ground floor open to the street (no blank walls) and to “advertise” the offerings in their buildings clearly, in an animated manner.

With all buildings built up to the sidewalks, the public right-of-way should also reflect the festive nature of an entertainment district. Initially this can be done with a simple “banner and benches” program that promotes key events and provides outdoor gathering places. Once the district has captured its market, more targeted improvements with a higher level of investment should be considered.

The intersection of Fourth and Washington Streets bears significance within the proposed entertainment district. The southwest corner is especially significant. The Commons has a history of hosting a wide variety of important, “milestone” events for the City of Columbus. Consideration should be given to recognizing this significance with improvements such as an appropriately scaled sculpture, a stronger sense of the space as a place to gather, and redefinition of the current architecture.

The intersection of Brown and Fourth Streets is a visual and functional terminus for the entertainment district. Several key anchors such as a hotel, theme restaurant, and shops are appropriate here. Consideration should be given for celebrating this clustering of venues with a gathering space and “animated” feature such as a fountain or tower.

Development Program

Initially, re-investment in Downtown should be primarily directed towards securing its role as a key area for amateur sports and recreation, learning and culture, living and shopping, and dining and entertainment. The Columbus Entertainment District will be an important catalyst for securing these roles for Downtown, with the introduction of a competitive amateur sports complex near downtown and in the greenest being developed in tandem.

Developing the CED will require differentiating the Fourth and Washington Street intersection (and its proximity to Mill Race Park) as a place that offers an experience only available in one place in the region. Emphasis should be placed on attracting diverse activities and venues that offer choices to residents as well as out of town visitors that keep them coming back again and again. This includes creating new places for recreation, cultural events, educational activities, dining, lifestyle retail and entertainment, as well as stabilizing existing venues. Subsequently, consideration should also be given to increasing quantity and quality of housing and reinforcing unique retail offerings in the CED. Public investment should be principally directed towards overall management of the redevelopment program through expansion of city-managed recreational spaces, addressing parking needs, and implementing right-of-way enhancements.

Mixed use development, which can include a mixture of residential, parking garages, and commercial space on the same property, are proposed throughout the CED as a means to re-establish the core of Downtown as an interesting place that is pedestrian friendly, constantly invigorating to be part of, and is economically vital. This approach applies to both new and existing property within the proposed CED.

Each of the eight and a half blocks within the Columbus Entertainment District plays a part in shaping an identity for this area. The development emphasis varies from west to east along Fourth Street. The six western blocks fronting Fourth Street are ready for redefinition. Reinforcement of retail and entertainment businesses is the principal strategy for the eastern two and a half blocks in the district.

The two of largest properties within the CED that are ready for redefinition include the Commons Mall (2 city blocks) and the Commons Mall Parking (about 2.5 city blocks). The Post Office property (1 city block) and the City Parking Lot (.5 city blocks) represent the balance of the property ready for redefinition.

As part of an overall strategy, the Commons Mall Parking located between Lindsay and Brown should be developed to serve as a transition between proposed Riverfront improvements, Mill Race Park, and the proposed mixed-use development along Fourth and Washington Streets. It also serves as an important visual and place defining terminus for Fourth Street. Flanked by the most significant traffic counts in Downtown, this six-acre site can bring to Downtown key uses that rely on these indicators and could benefit from surrounding recreational and entertainment activities.

The Commons Mall property has a two blocks frontage on Fourth Street, the western half of the three hundred blocks of Washington Street and benefits from high traffic counts on Brown Street. This development program calls for a two stage approach to reactivating this block. With an eventual overall redefinition of both these blocks in mind, interim development activities should focus incrementally, increasing this property’s role in an active and vital CED.

Fronting Fourth and Fifth Streets, the Post Office and City Parking Lot blocks have the opportunity to influence the further development of the contemporary architecture character of Fifth Street and play a role in activating the northern block faces of Fourth Street. Located between the Fourth and Washington Street intersection and the Commons Mall Parking property, these properties should sustain an energetic street and commercial mix.

The development program is organized around four development initiatives or tiers of activity. This development flow recognizes the phased nature of development and offers an incremental approach to activating the CED. The following summarize the character and expectations for each tier of development for the Columbus Entertainment District:

Tier 1 Develop Currently Underutilized Parking Lots Commons Mall Parking north of Fourth Street between Lindsay and Brown Streets and between Jackson Street and the alley to the east

During the first development tier for the CED, emphasis will be placed on the northern segment of the Commons Mall Parking, retaining the current parking and automotive center until the fourth development tier. This first tier will focus on attracting more visitors to Downtown through a hospitality oriented venue.

New development on the Commons Mall Parking north of Fourth Street as well as other development activities will require a re-definition of Downtown parking facilities. As part of the redefinition surface parking in the half block north of Fourth Street between Jackson Street and the alley should be converted to a parking structure (as recommended by several past downtown parking studies) that would serve the needs of employers and retail (e.g. Dell Brothers) or dining (e.g. Papa’s Deli) customers in the Fourth and Washington Street sub-district. The first level of the parking deck should include new dining, entertainment, and retail establishments.

For the blocks along Washington Street, reinforcement activities should be focused on supporting existing retail, encouraging the transition of first floor space from service to retail where possible, and introducing quality housing in underutilized upper floors.

Tier 2. Develop Mill Race Sports Complex

Development of the land across the river from Mill Race Park into championship-caliber playing fields for amateur sports would draw people into the Downtown, where they would find hotels, dining, entertainment, and retail opportunities nearby. Adjacency to these downtown services will make this type of development a unique project within the amateur sports market. Development of this area for sports fields suits the limitation defined by its tendency to flood. These improvements would also work towards furthering the Columbus' downtown gateway initiative along State Road 46 .

Tier 3. Redefine Current Post Office Block

Redefinition of this block from a single low traffic and low intensity use to a mixed-use development to include street level dining, entertainment, and retail businesses with high-quality housing above, will activate a key block within the entertainment district.

The Great Good Place

by Ray Oldenburg, 1999, New York: Marlowe and Company.
Reviewed by Jerry Kloby

One of the important ingredients in building community is a physical design that facilitates social interaction. It is difficult for people to develop the networks that are a crucial part of human social systems unless there are places for encounters to take place. Without casual regular encounters it is very difficult for all the other steps in community building to take place: discussion, organization, action, accomplishment, etc. Indeed, one of the main points that Benjamin Barber makes in A Place for Us is that enlarging and reinforcing public space is an important element in strengthening civil society.

These are the sorts of public spaces that The Great Good Place is about. Sociologist Ray Oldenburg refers to them as “third places”, the first two being home and the workplace. Third places are the core settings for informal public life, they are places where people can meet old friends, make new acquaintances, discuss the important issues of the day, and temporarily throw off the weight of the world that can drag them down. Oldenburg claims that involvement in informal public life has important psychological, social, and political implications, and such involvement is made possible by the existence of third places.

Some essential ingredients for successful third places include:

1. They must be relatively inexpensive to enter and to purchase food and drinks.
2. They must be highly accessible; ideally one should be able to get there by foot from work or one's home.
3. A number of people can be expected to be there on a daily basis.
4. All people should feel welcome; it should be easy to get into a conversation. A person who goes there should be able to find both old and new friends each time they visit.





Housing is important to making downtown an active and thriving place, particularly after normal business hours. As depicted in the CED Development Program, this plan calls for significant investment in downtown housing over the next 10 years. The adjacent images provide examples of potential multi-family housing, appropriate for this area of downtown.



Tier 4. Redefine Commons Mall and Commons Mall Parking south of Fourth Street between Lindsay and Brown Streets

Redefining this two-block retail site to include additional dining, entertainment, and lifestyle retail complimenting current offerings is critical to securing development momentum. With the exception of Sears, much of the retail space in this mall is vacant and those merchants still in the mall are struggling to maintain market share. This property also includes the Commons, a recognized community assembly space, two active movie theaters (Yes Cinema and Commons Cinema), and a new restaurant (Bistro 310), all of which would be enhanced by additional development within the Mall.

Concurrent with the redefinition of the Commons Mall, mixed use development on the southern segment of the Commons Mall Parking Lot will further activate downtown and complement the first tiers development of the northern segment of this block.

Project Phasing

The CED Development Program will be implemented in four tiers over a ten year period. The strongest market opportunities and critical market building projects have been incorporated into the first tiers. Quickly defining and activating the CED as the preferred entertainment destination in the region is goal of this phasing strategy. This includes attracting new venues and reinforcing the current inventory of venues. Consideration has been given to maintaining and improving parking facilities as an integral part of the each tier.

Tier 1. Immediate (1-3 years)

The projects that would create the highest and quickest return on immediate private- and public-sector investments and serve as an important catalyst for future development include:

- 1) Hotel - A 120-room hotel with 10,000 square feet of meeting space. This facility will be a pivotal link between Mill Race Park, Downtown offices, and the Columbus Entertainment District. This hotel will serve as a home base for amateur sports, business, and tourism visitors, offering them easy access to Downtown destinations.
- 2) Dining - 1-2 theme restaurants adjacent to the hotel as catalyst projects for expanding the dining options in Downtown.
- 3) Parking - In order to provide parking for this tier's venues and to create capacity for the future, replace the existing City surface lot with a multi-level parking garage for 370 cars. This garage will serve both Downtown customers and employees. About 15 to 20% of the spaces could be leased to surrounding employers to generate revenue for operating cost and retiring debt.
- 4) Commercial - Up to 15,000 square feet of new commercial on the first floor of the parking garage should front Fourth Street. Leasing for this space should target restaurants with unique menus or atmosphere, clubs or pubs that offer a mix of live music, food, and drink, and possibly a mid-market restaurant frequently requested in the community survey.
- 5) Mall Enhancements - Initiate an interim improvement programs for the Commons Mall as part of the "Benches & Banners" program. The goal is to activate the Fourth and Washington Street frontages. Specifically this should include signage that increases the visibility of key tenants

CED Development Program										
Scenarios		Commercial sf*	Adult Education sf	Arts & Culture sf	Residential sf	Residential Units	Hotel sf	Hotel Keys	Office sf	Parking Garage Spaces
Tier 1										
CM Parking Lot North		10,000					75,000	120		
Commons Mall			10,000 a							
City Parking Lot		15,000								370 d
Washington Street		1,500 b			1,000 b	5				
Tier 2										
Sports Complex		Multiple playing fields for a variety of sports with support facilities such as concessions and stands.								
Washington Street		2,500 b			10,000 b	5				
Tier 3										
Post Office		30,000			95,000	60				120 e
Washington Street		1,500 b			10,000 b	5				
Tier 4										
CM Parking Lot South		15,000			48,000	24				240 d
Commons Mall	C1	100,000		120,000					40,000	
Commons Mall	C2	100,000	70,000 a	40,000 c					40,000	
Washington Street		1,500 b			10,000 b	5				
Total	C1	177,000	10,000	120,000	174,000	104	75,000	120	40,000	730
Total	C2	177,000	80,000	40,000	174,000	104	75,000	120	40,000	730
Notes:										
* Commercial includes restaurants, clubs, and retail.										
a Scenario C1 keeps small satellite Adult Education and C2 expands part of the redefined eastern Commons Mall block.										
b Ongoing reinforcement program targeting ground floor retail and loft style conversions.										
c Scenario C2 retains the Commons as part of the redefinition of the eastern Commons Mall block.										
d Development of new parking structure supplements surface parking spaces lost due to development.										
e Parking provided under building.										
CM = Commons Mall										
sf = square feet										

Ongoing Development and Redefinition

The blocks surrounding the Fourth and Washington intersection include a diverse range of dining, entertainment, and retail establishments. Reinforcement programs are critical to generating an atmosphere of "fun and food at Fourth and Washington Streets". The retail and entertainment opportunity in this area will be increased by the addition of commercial space on the northern and eastern fronts of the Commons Mall. Reinforcement activities should be focused on supporting existing retail, encouraging the transition of first floor space from service to retail where possible, and the introduction of quality housing in underutilized upper floors.

- (theater and restaurant) and façade animation (temporary art installation, lighting display).
- 6) Adult Education - Open a satellite campus for adult education programs in the downtown that utilizes 5,000 to 10,000 square feet for classrooms. Adult education, including advanced degree programs, should be accessible to Downtown employees as well as other segments of the community. Long-term planning should be done to determine scope and location for permanent adult education facilities.



Tier 2. Short-Term (3-5 years)

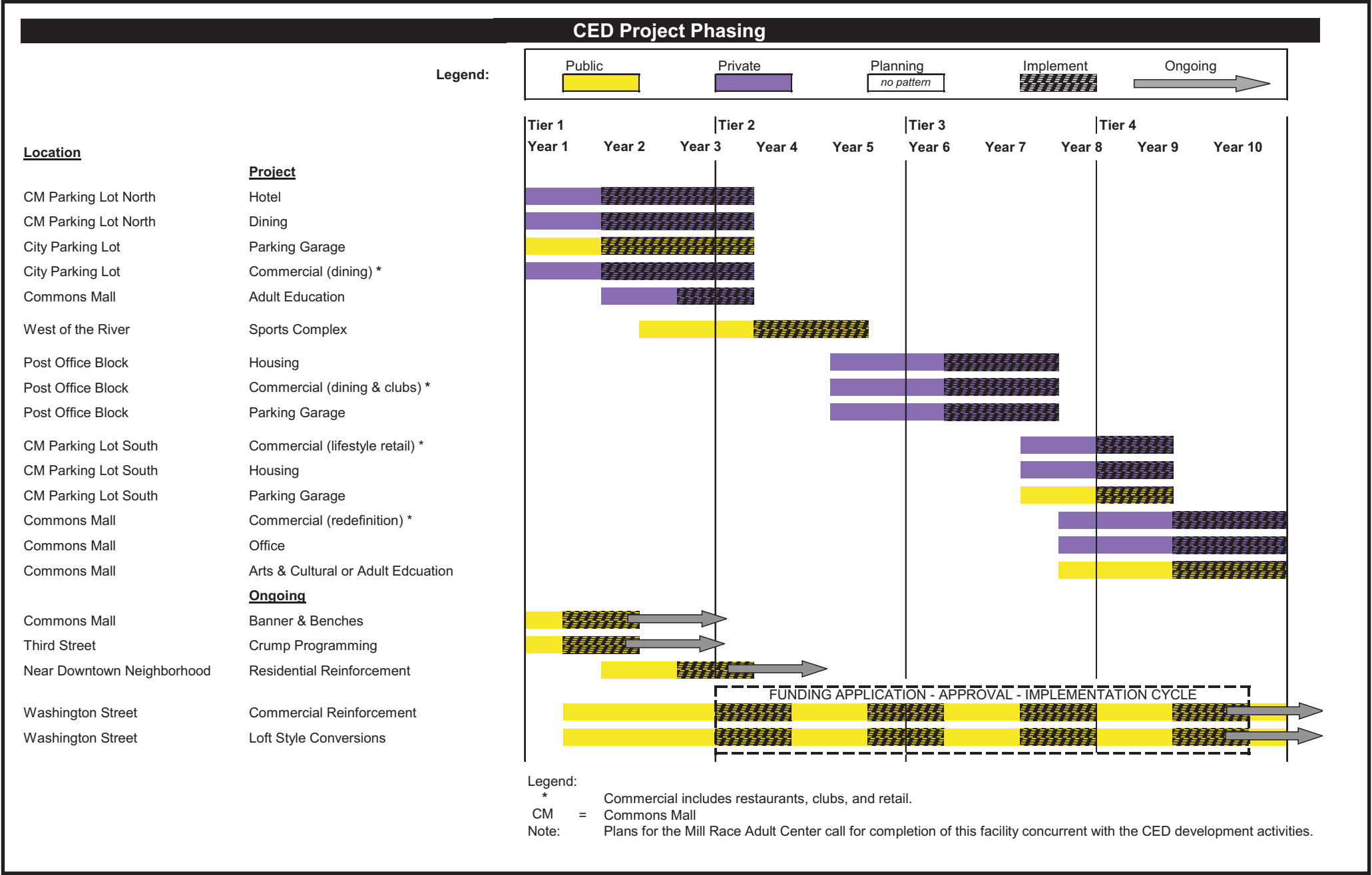
Securing a segment of Columbus' growing amateur sports events calendar as element in the overall strategy for activating Downtown will require the planning and development of an amateur sports complex coordinated with the Greenbelt and proposed riverfront development. These facilities will be located on the west side of the Flat Rock River. Their implementation of the complex should be closely coordinated with the opening of tier one's hospitality projects.

- 1) Playing Field - Develop a variety of playing fields serving amateur sports. The City of Columbus has hosted both soccer and softball tournaments recently. Further consideration should be given to selecting sports that will position the City well in securing tournaments in the future.
- 2) Gateway Connection Coordinate the development of these sports venues with existing improvements, endeavoring to enhance the gateway statement. Reinforce the connection with Downtown with well developed connections to the People Trail, SR46, and the city transit system.
- 3) Mall Enhancements - Interim improvements to the Commons Mall should continue.

Tier 3. Mid-Term (5-8 years)

Implementing tier 3 projects will initiate new Downtown housing offerings and increase entertainment venues including restaurants, clubs, and boutique retail for visitors and residents within the CED.

- 1) Housing - The current post office should be demolished and a new mixed-use development should be built on that block. The space should include a minimum of 60 or more housing units, either townhouses or flats, in two- to three-story buildings. These units should be designed to reinforce Fifth Street's architectural heritage. Parking for the housing should be provided on site.
- 2) Commercial development on the Post Office Block - Up to 30,000 square feet of new commercial space at street level along Fourth Street. Emphasis should be placed on attracting lifestyle or boutique retail that would be of interest to Columbus residents as well as hotel guests visiting the CED.
- 3) Mall Enhancements - Interim improvements to the Commons Mall should continue.



Local and regional artists are important to creating an entertainment district that is fun and visually and mentally stimulating. As demonstrated in the adjacent images, public art is utilized by many communities to make streetscapes and spaces more interesting and inviting.



Henry Moore's "large arch" in the Bartholomew County Public Library is an icon and important landmark that people use to identify and relate to a key public space.





Well defined and programed spaces attract people and encourage them to linger beyond normal business hours. The Columbus Entertainment District should include places, and spaces for people to gather, be entertained and encouraged to stay.



Downtown Columbus is on the cusp of becoming an active and exciting place to live, work, shop and play. The history and architecture of Washington Street are important to downtown's success as a regional Center.

Tier 4. Long-Term (8-10 years)

In order to redefine the Commons Mall property and to establish housing as a key component of the downtown, thus creating a resident customer base for the CED and other Downtown establishments, this tier includes two scenarios, reflecting the range of possible uses contemplated at the time of this report for a pivotal 2-block parcel in Downtown.

Shared elements for both Scenarios

- 1) Commercial - Edge the Washington Street and Fourth Street fronts of the eastern Commons Mall block with new commercial space for shops, restaurants, coffee shops, and gift shops. This approach will activate both block faces along each of these streets, an important feature of successful urban commercial streets.
- 2) Commercial - Reconfigure the western Commons Mall block to better support retail. Retail should include small or big box retail to the south (e.g. Sears). Smaller shops, restaurants, and pubs should be located along the northern Fourth Street frontage.
- 3) Commercial - Activate the gathering space at the terminus of the west end of Fourth Street and the edge of Brown Street to the south with up to 15,000 square feet of commercial, focusing on lifestyle retail that will appeal to visitors and residents.
- 4) Office - Office space can be located above the proposed uses for this block. This will provide competitive class-A space for new businesses and a place for existing or expanding Washington Street businesses to relocate. It also provides an option for relocating ground floor service businesses along Washington Street.
- 5) Housing - Integrate up to 24 new housing units with new commercial development along Brown Street and the gathering space at the terminus of the west end of Fourth Street.
- 6) Parking - In order to provide parking for this tier's venues and to create capacity for the future, replace the existing Commons Mall surface lot by building a multi-level parking garage for 240 cars. This garage will serve both Downtown customers and employees. About 15 to 20% of the spaces could be leased to employers in the new office building on the west Commons Mall block to generate revenue for operating cost and retiring debt.
- 7) Streets - Re-open Jackson Street to provide more direct access to the heart of Downtown for motorists and pedestrians. The goal is to improve wayfinding by providing another clear access point (as perceived from the Second and Jackson Street intersection) and directing visitors to "available" public parking.

Unique elements of Scenario 1

- Performance Space - Redefine the eastern Commons Mall block as an arts and cultural center providing a performance space for community arts activities such as the Columbus Indiana Philharmonic, live theater, receptions space, and exhibit space. Avoid the "dead walled concert hall" by stipulating that northern and eastern edge of this block should be allocated to street oriented small shops and small dining establishments. The goal is to bring community-supported arts patrons to downtown. The strategy, building on existing momentum and consolidate a variety of successful community arts programs in the heart of Columbus and the region. This will strategically place selected organizations on a site with a strong arts, culture, and heritage tradition.

Unique elements of Scenario 2

- Adult Education - Redefine the eastern Commons Mall block as a home of a Downtown adult education center. This facility could be a branch campus for institutions such as IUPUC and Ivy Tech. Dead edges should also be avoided with this use by introducing commercial space for shops and restaurants along the both the Fourth and Washington Streets.

Ongoing

- Benches & Banners Program - Public investment is required to create an active and vital street environment that compliments private CED investment. This should include a graphics program using banners or other promotional signage to clearly define the Columbus Entertainment District and its activities. Provide ample outdoor seating, expanding the gathering space to the street as well as the clubs and

restaurants along Fourth Street. Outdoor dining should be encouraged.

- Neighborhood Reinforcement - Organizing, planning, and funding initiatives oriented towards reinforcing existing near Downtown residential neighborhoods should parallel the CED development. A pilot neighborhood with adequate funding for basic governance organizing and planning should be identified.
- Washington Street Reinforcement - Stabilize and incrementally expand the inventory of retail businesses in the 300 and 400 blocks of Washington Street. This includes identifying opportunities to facilitate relocation of ground floor service businesses to upper floors or other locations, creating a greater density of street-level retailers along these block faces.
- Crump Theater Expanded Calendar - Currently the Crump offers a unique mix of live entertainment events serving a youth-oriented demographic not generally found in Columbus. Support should be provided to expand the event calendar from 34 to 52 events per year, with additional growth in subsequent years. Its audience should be expanded to include a wider range of patrons interested in live, popular music performances.
- Downtown Development Advocate - Implementing the initial work program for the downtown strategic development plan is a full time job. In addition to attracting and securing development in Downtown, an advocate should be charged with promotional activities (i.e. special events, advertising, beautification) and facilitating collaborative relationships with Downtown partners (i.e. Heritage Fund, City Park's events program, and property owners).



The Downtown Columbus Strategic Development Plan proposes a development strategy to restore Downtown Columbus as a regional destination. The strategy includes animating downtown with both physical and programmatic developments to encourage people to live and spend their leisure time in the heart of the community. Programmatic developments include strengthening key attractors, like amateur sports, while physical developments include buildings like hotels, restaurants and complexes necessary to host amateur sporting events and other proposed economic generators.

Incorporation of community input and local creativity will give downtown the edge needed to compete for regional investment dollars. Combining development with local flare will also give Columbus the uniqueness and character demanded by its citizens and leaders.



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Downtown Columbus | Strategic Plan

Columbus Redevelopment Commission



August, 2005